

Safe Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI)



“Together meeting the challenge”

SNI DESIRED OUTCOMES

Presented by: Albert O. Jennings III, SNI Director

July 25, 2003

This document is compilation of community research and input from members of the Mayor’s Task Force Steering Committee, City Staff, and citizens of Lynchburg.

Safe Neighborhoods Initiative



“Together meeting the challenge”

“Active neighborhood involvement and citizen leadership will produce thriving, attractive, safe neighborhoods where all citizens are committed to work together as a community to meet the challenges which face us all.” - Lynchburg City Council Vision

Vision:

The Safe Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) is a City-wide comprehensive collaborative networking approach to revitalizing and making Lynchburg’s City neighborhoods safe places to live, learn, work and play. SNI is comprised of local partnerships with businesses, citizens, civic groups, faith based ministries, government, nonprofit agencies, and neighborhood associations whose unified purpose is to build “community” at the neighborhood level and to improve the quality of life for citizens, families, and youth through promoting and providing an array of services that address the physical, social, and economic health of City neighborhoods.

Mission:

The mission of the Safe Neighborhoods Initiative is to cultivate and preserve healthy, safe, and vibrant neighborhoods by bringing people and resources together to enhance the quality of life and services provided to City neighborhoods.

The Mayor’s Safe Neighborhoods Steering Committee has identified eight major vision points that would ultimately enhance the development and productivity of the City’s neighborhoods, and they are:

1. Youth Development
2. Social Intervention
3. Parenting & Family Enrichment
4. Neighborhood Building
5. Communication & Technology
6. Public Safety
7. Economic Development
8. Transportation

(These categories were derived from citizens concerns that were observed during the City-wide Mayor’s Safe Neighborhoods Summit – Sept. 02’.)

Safe Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI)

“Together meeting the challenge”

Outcomes desired by the Safe Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI)

The planning, development and implementation of the Safe Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) strategy will be a dynamic, inclusive, and incremental process that will involve citizens, businesses, local organizations and City government working together collaboratively. It is a process that will have a profound affect on how the City of Lynchburg conducts business.

The goal of SNI is to involve citizens in meaningful ways that enable them to apply their assets to solving problems and influencing decisions affecting their neighborhoods.

When SNI is successfully implemented, there will be:

- citizens who feel included and consulted on City-related matters;
- citizens who feel City government is responsive and caring;
- citizens who feel a greater sense of community, who feel they know their neighbors better;
- citizens who feel services are better suited to meet their needs;
- citizens who have a greater understanding of the limits of government and why the City cannot solve all problems or meet all needs; and
- citizens who feel “reconnected” to their local government.

The following outcomes will serve as key indicators of success throughout the implementation of the Safe Neighborhoods Initiative.

I. Cultivate a “proud,” self-sufficient, revitalized neighborhood spirit.

1. Improve the perceptions and images of targeted neighborhood conservation areas as defined in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
 - Neighbors convene to assess the images they and others have of their neighborhood.
 - Neighbors identify neighborhood assets.
 - Neighborhood leaders will be identified and supported.
 - Neighborhood residents will identify public amenities and services required to foster neighborhood pride, citizen involvement, and supported neighborhood livability, including parks, streets, and other public infrastructure.
 - Neighborhood action plans will be developed per each targeted neighborhood.

2. Create and sustain opportunities for citizens to build a sense of community.
 - Support grass roots efforts (including clubs, voter leagues, neighborhood watch, and neighborhood associations) that focus on residents' shared commitment to build safe, welcoming, and well-maintained neighborhoods.
 - Promote social and family gathering events to strengthen neighborhood pride and cultural diversity.
3. Provide support and technical assistance to citizens and neighborhoods.

A list of technical assistance services follows:

- a.) Citizen Board Training
- b.) Neighborhood Leadership Development
- c.) Organizing Community Events/Neighborhood Improvement Projects
- d.) Neighborhood Council Membership Recruitment/Development
- e.) Assistance/Training in Grant-Writing and Fundraising
- f.) Goal Setting/Planning
- g.) Assistance in implementing Neighborhood Goals/Plans
- h.) Produce Newsletters/Help with Communication
- i.) Assistance with By-Laws, Taxes, Forms, etc.
- j.) Analysis of Neighborhood Conditions/Issues/Assets
- k.) Crime Prevention Strategies/Community Policing
- l.) Neighborhood Problem-Solving Workshops
- m.) Senior/Youth Neighborhood Programming
- n.) General Technical Assistance

II. Develop a neighborhood management process and networking strategy that would ensure the capacity to build and restructure healthy, stronger and safer neighborhoods.

1. Increase residents' ability to manage, maintain, and solve neighborhood issues.
 - Facilitate neighborhood involvement and cooperation.
 - Assist and encourage neighborhoods to set priorities and find solutions to their own problems.
 - Educate residents on such subjects as (1) City's services, (2) the community's role, (3) leadership, and (4) neighborhood conflict management and other issues as deemed necessary.
 - Neighborhood associations and other community based groups increase neighborhood capacity and will engage in partnerships and coalitions to carry out neighborhood strategic plans.
 - Maintain support for existing neighborhood organizations and assist in the development of associations in communities where there are none.

2. Align City services to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

A. Develop an ongoing program/service assessment and evaluation process.

- Departments will examine current/future resource allocations for the benefit of planning and leveraging monies to support neighborhood oriented service projects/programs and outreach opportunities.
 - Create a database of neighborhood City resources
- Departments will develop assessments and program/service reviews.
 - Identify areas of redundancy and overlap
 - Identify gaps in programs/service and attempt to realign resources to eliminate redundancies and fill gaps
 - Monitor efficiency of programs/services
- Department leaders will increase efforts to improve operations, decrease turnaround times, streamline work processes, and work cooperatively and jointly to provide quality neighborhood services using “Best Practices Management.”
 - Examine the existing organizational structure and identify and attempt to eliminate inefficient management practices.
 - Identify operational goals that correlate with the emerging SNI goals.
 - Create cohesiveness, internal networking, and enhance opportunities for neighborhood improvement and revitalization efforts.
 - Develop and conduct citizen surveys to identify the particular needs of neighborhoods and to measure the quality of existing City programs/services.

B. Increase collaborations amongst City departments to produce an effective neighborhood-based service delivery system.

- Support efforts which can facilitate and improve the health, livability, and safety of City neighborhoods.
- Increase the communication between neighborhood residents and local government (e.g. develop a SNI webpage, newsletters, correspondence through water bills).
- Promote networking strategies and efforts to serve a more diverse community.
- Explore actions that will allow City departments to become inclusive and more diverse in their neighborhood service delivery.
- Develop an outreach program that serves to expand social/human services to neighborhoods through the utilization of the City’s community centers and other available facilities (e.g. churches, schools, non-City funded community centers).

III. Correlate public and private resources and services on a variety of fronts to assist citizens, families, youth and neighborhoods.

1. Increase civic participation and foster community partnerships.
 - Facilitate community dialogue and the sharing of information between neighbors, neighborhoods, and service providers.
 - Increase awareness of and access to community and government resources.
 - Involve citizens in decisions that affect neighborhood maintenance, improvement and development.
 - Provide assistance for public and private entities to help them “cut red tape” so that processes do not unduly burden them in their services.
 - Promote collaboration between neighborhoods, individuals, businesses, public schools, governments, non-profits, and faith based ministries.
 - Increase age appropriate activities and alternative positive things to do for youth, families, and senior citizens.
 - Foster community development activities in a coordinated and mutually supportive manner with other private and public programs and funding sources.
2. Develop a cooperative, trusting, and understanding relationship between community partners.
 - Create a method of evaluating the directions and accomplishments of partnerships.
 - Conduct community and partnership impact assessments.
 - Set priorities and develop timelines for each project/partnership.
 - Review projects/partnerships periodically to make sure they are on task.
3. Promote cooperation with regional, state, federal, and private organizations.
 - Obtain support of state and federal agencies for partnership in local initiatives.
 - Maximize the capacity and impact of established neighborhood oriented programs/resources.
 - Establish partnerships to strengthen mutual cooperation and private investment in neighborhood revitalization and development efforts.
 - Develop a plan of action to leverage available capital/resources to improve targeted neighborhoods (e.g. Weed and Seed, Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, etc.).

IV. Preserve, stabilize, and improve the physical, social, and economic health of City neighborhoods.

1. Maintain and improve neighborhood housing, transportation and infrastructure using existing and future resources.

- Assess the feasibility to increase the number and distribution of affordable, sanitary and safe housing options to meet community needs.
- Streamline a process whereby the City creates a funding source to leverage resources on a continuum to improve infrastructure and revitalize distressed neighborhoods (e.g. assess the benefits of hiring a grant writer, presume better processes of allocating CDBG monies, re-evaluate CIP proposed projects).
- Invest in communication, transportation and technologies which support neighborhoods.
- Assist in the preservation, maintenance, and improvement of neighborhood facilities which are integral to sound community development and to the general health, safety, and public well being of City neighborhoods.
- Increase the awareness of neighborhood and housing issues (replicate model programs like the “Spot Blight Program”); enforce codes and develop a process to engage “slum” landlords and neighborhood convenience stores located in targeted neighborhoods, holding them accountable for the maintenance and condition of their property.
- Promote opportunities for volunteerism and investment in the City’s neighborhood conservation areas.
- Sustain and create neighborhoods which physically accommodate and integrate people of diverse ages, incomes, ethnic groups and abilities.
- Develop the economic capacity of City neighborhoods.
- Involve residents in the planning phase of developing community activities, leadership training, beautification projects, and other projects to strengthen the social fabric of the neighborhood.

2. Increase the capacity and effectiveness of the City’s Code Enforcement Task Force.

- Continue efforts to include more neighborhood leaders, residents, and groups into the code enforcement process.
- Facilitate outreach efforts concerning new initiatives pertaining to neighborhood improvement projects, clean-ups, etc. and new ways to manage neighborhood blight.
- Assist City staff and key community stakeholders in preparing neighborhood based plans for City neighborhoods.
- Decrease and eliminate elements that perpetuate an unfriendly and unsafe neighborhood environment.
- Evaluate and update antiquated City code ordinances.